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House Approves Legislation to Support Teachers

Johnson: "Supporting Teachers Key to Providing a 21st Century Education"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. House of Representatives today approved a package of bills to strengthen and support America's teachers, giving them the tools they need to continue providing America's children with the comprehensive education they need and deserve.

"Supporting America's teachers is key to providing America's children with a 21st century education," Johnson said. "We need to help teachers help their students acquire the skills and education they need to realize their goals and dreams. Today the House acted to ensure our teachers have the financial and professional tools they need to do what they do best – educate our children."

Today the U.S. House passed by voice vote the following legislation:

- **H.R. 4409, the Teacher Training Enhancement Act.** Enacted in January 2002, the bipartisan No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) calls for a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by the close of the 2005 - 2006 school year. To help answer that call, the Teacher Training Enhancement Act will strengthen teacher training programs by improving accountability and expanding innovative opportunities to train the teachers of tomorrow.
- **H.R. 4411, the Priorities for Graduate Studies Act.** The shortage of highly qualified math, science, and special education teachers extends beyond the nation's K-12 classrooms. A lack of faculty at the graduate level to train the teachers of tomorrow is also contributing to these shortages, and it must be addressed to fortify the pipeline of highly qualified teachers. To increase faculty in these high-demand subject areas, the Priorities for Graduate Studies Act will target federal aid for graduate studies to these subject areas.

Since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, Congress has passed legislation to continue supporting teachers through tax relief, federal funding increases, and enhanced loan forgiveness. Last July the House passed the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, which more than triples the loan forgiveness available (from \$5,000 to \$17,500) to math, science, and special education teachers, along with reading specialists, who serve in high-need schools for five years.

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